

Message Text

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71

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 RSC-01 L-03 CIAE-00

DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 USIA-15 PRS-01 SR-02

ORM-03 VO-03 SCA-01 FBIE-00 SY-10 INSE-00 DRC-01 /106 W

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R 041929Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY LA PAZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 845

INFO AMEMBASSY ASUNCION

C O N F I D E N T I A L LA PAZ 5395

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BL

SIBJ: REPORTED ASYLUM OF BOLIVIAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS

IN PARAGUAYAN EMBASSY

REF: LA PAZ 5364 AND 5378

1. IT IS NOW CLEAR THAT PARAGUAYAN AMBASSADOR WAS ACTING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS FROM HIS GOVERNMENT IN DENYING REPORTS THAT BOLIVIAN AIR FORCE OFFICERS HAD SOUGHT ASYLUM.

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF USARMA MESSAGE SENT TODAY AS IR NO. 6 808 0243 73 WHICH EMBASSY HOPES WILL CLARIFY CONFLICTING STORIES REPORTED IN REFTELS. QUOTE ON MORNING OF 3 SEP LT COL HUGO MONOZ RODRIGUEZ AND MAJOR CHILEN VARGAS, THE TWO AIR FORCE OFFICERS WHO HAD SOUGHT REFUGE IN THE PARAGUAYAN EMBASSY, LEFT THE EMBASSY FOLLOWING PROLONGED DISCUSSIONS WITH COL RIVEROS. COL RIVEROS FOR THREE DAYS HAD BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH AIR FORCE COMMANDER B/GEN ADRIAZOLA AND AIR FORCE A-2 LT/COL JORGE LAGUNA, NEGOTIATING THE RETURN TO BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES ON CONDITION THAT NO UNDUE RECRIMINATIONS BE IMPOSED.

3. QUOTE (C) THIS ASYLUM SITUATION HAS BEEN CONFUSED, ACCORDING TO SOURCE, AS RESULT OF A DELIBERATE STRATEGY INITIATED BY THE PARAGUAYAN GOVERNMENT. BECAUSE OF THE CURRENT GOOD RE-
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LATIONS BETWEEN PARAGUAYAN PRESIDENT STROESSNER AND BOLIVIAN

PRESIDENT BANZER, THE PARAGUAYAN EMBASSY RESOLVED TO TAKE ALL MEASURES TO AVOID ANY EMBARRASSING EFFECTS OF THIS REQUEST FOR ASYLUM. THE EMBASSY VIEWED AS ESPECIALLY EMBARRASSING THE IDEA THAT TWO MILITARY OFFICERS ACCUSED OF PLOTTING AGAINST BAKER SHOULD ASK FOR, AND POSSIBLY BE GIVEN ASYLUM, IN PARAGUAY. CONSEQUENTLY THE PARAGUAYAN AMBASSADOR CONSISTENTLY INFORMED NOT ONLY THE PRESS, BUT ALSO US EMB DCM, THAT NO MILITARY OFFICERS HAD REQUESTED ASYLUM UNQUOTE.

4. QUOTE (C) DURING 31 AUG AND 1 SEP, PARAGUAYAN ARMA TALKED CLOSELY WITH MUNOZ AND VARGAS. LT COL MUNOZ RODRIGUEZ EXPLAINED HE HAD SOUGHT ASYLUM BECAUSE CIVILIAN FRIENDS LINKED WITH THE VALVERDE RING HAD CONVINCED HIM THAT BANZER FELT MONOZ

WAS BEHIND THE SANTA CRUZ PLOT TO KILL THE PRESIDENT, AND WOULD THUS TAKE REVENGE ON MONOZ. RIVEROS THUS BEGAN NEGOTIATIONS WITH ADRIAZOLA AND LAGUNA TO INSURE THAT MONOZ AND VARGAS WOULD BE FAIRLY TREATED IF RELEASED TO BOLIVIAN AUTHORITIES. WHEN THIS GUARANTEE WAS GIVEN, THE TWO OFFICERS LEFT THE PARAGUAYAN EMBASSY ON 3 SEP, THEREBY ENABLING RIVEROS, WHO HAD SPENT SEVERAL CONSECUTIVE DAYS AND NIGHTS WITH THEM, TO GO WITH ARMA TO THE PARAGUAYAN/BOLIVIA FOOTBALL MATCH.

5. QUOTE COMMENTS: (C) SUCH LABYRINTHINE PREVARICATIONS ARE CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LA PAZ MILIEU AND, IN VIEW OF PARAGUAYAN/BOLIVIAN RELATIONS, UNDERSTANDABLE IN THIS CASE TO SOME DEGREE. ARMA'S RELATIONS WITH RIVEROS AND HIS WIFE ARE CLOSE, AND ARMA AT NO TIME DOUBTED THE VERACITY OF SOURCE'S INFORMATION. UNQUOTE.
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